

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF  
**COMMERCE**

SINCLAIR WEEKS, SECRETARY

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ADVANCE REPORT ON RETAIL TRADE, SEPTEMBER 1956

Total sales of retail stores in September were \$15.7 billion, the U.S. Department of Commerce announced today. This advance figure, after adjustment for seasonal factors and trading day differences, was 2 percent below August 1956 but was unchanged from September a year ago.

The September sales figures are based on the Advance Report on Retail Trade, a monthly survey of the Bureau of the Census conducted in cooperation with a representative cross-section of about 1,700 retail firms which, in total, operate some 35,000 stores in the United States. The firms which are cooperating in the early reporting of sales are part of a larger group which furnishes figures at a later date. The advance estimates are preliminary and subject to revision, but the revision of the total seldom exceeds 1 $\frac{1}{2}$  percent.

The preliminary Census figures are shown in table 1 on the reverse side. The Office of Business Economics observed that total sales of retail stores, on a seasonally adjusted basis, which were at a new high in August, declined in September primarily as a result of lowered motor-vehicle sales.

(more)

Table 1.--SALES OF RETAIL STORES IN THE UNITED STATES, BY KIND-OF-BUSINESS GROUP  
(NOT ADJUSTED for seasonal factors and trading day differences)

Kind-of-business group	Sales (millions of dollars)		
	1956		September 1955
	September	August	
Retail stores, total <sup>1</sup> .....	15,658	16,335	15,905
Food group.....	3,910	3,988	3,766
Grocery stores.....	3,298	3,400	3,205
Eating and drinking places.....	1,256	1,334	1,219
General merchandise group.....	1,693	1,663	1,674
Department stores <sup>2</sup> .....	926	899	919
Apparel group.....	1,006	863	910
Furniture and appliance group.....	859	900	821
Lumber, building, hardware group <sup>3</sup> .....	1,219	1,302	1,297
Automotive group.....	2,659	3,110	3,368
Gasoline service stations.....	1,202	1,253	1,049
Drug and proprietary stores.....	462	475	425

See footnotes below table 2.

Source: Bureau of the Census

Table 2.--SALES OF RETAIL STORES IN THE UNITED STATES, BY KIND-OF-BUSINESS GROUP  
(ADJUSTED for seasonal factors and trading day differences)

Kind-of-business group	Sales (millions of dollars)			Percent change, August 1956 from--	
	1956		August 1955	July 1956	August 1955
	August	July			
Retail stores, total <sup>1</sup> .....	16,249	16,019	15,662	+1	+4
Durable goods stores, total <sup>1</sup> .....	5,508	5,514	5,763	0	-4
Nondurable goods stores, total <sup>1</sup> ..	10,741	10,505	9,900	+2	+8
Food group.....	3,890	3,842	3,683	+1	+6
Eating and drinking places.....	1,215	1,191	1,165	+2	+4
General merchandise group.....	1,781	1,763	1,671	+1	+7
Apparel group.....	1,039	956	892	+9	+16
Furniture and appliance group.....	886	899	827	-1	+7
Lumber, building, hardware group <sup>3</sup> ..	1,162	1,191	1,169	-2	-1
Automotive group.....	3,022	2,981	3,363	+1	-10
Gasoline service stations.....	1,164	1,150	1,026	+1	+13
Drug and proprietary stores.....	487	479	442	+2	+10

Source: Office of Business Economics

<sup>1</sup> Totals include data for kinds of business not shown separately.

<sup>2</sup> Based on preliminary estimates supplied by Federal Reserve Board.

<sup>3</sup> Includes farm equipment dealers.